New South

Registration and Revolution in McComb

A Word to the Mayor of Norfolk

Dark Dungeon and White Problem

By MARGARET LONG

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THE VIVIDLY DISCOMFITING insight into what it feels like to be a Negro in the South and, indeed, through the United States, is disturbing many book-reading whites and roiling us up into a state wide-eyed, aghast and protesting by turns.

The relentless, fine-styled and bitterly entertaining melancholy of, say, James Baldwin plunges the white Southerner into wretched shock somewhat alleviated by hot surges of indignant identity with Negroes. If one is addicted to Mr. Baldwin's essays, his insistence on showing us his plight is also likely to evoke an occasional cry for mercy, like, "Please, Mr. Baldwin! We all got troubles."

Valdosta-born Louis Lomax is a rather more treacherous writer to read and talk with. Mr. Lomax writes sometimes so candidly and in such fresh style of the unsuspected anguish of the Negro lot that one is charmed and amused at the satire and force of his prose, only to be felled by his insistence, too, that we behold the perverting misery of race discrimination. He talks with an exuberant and amiable vitality in a disarming accent still redolent of South Georgia, and, just when you think everything is going to be all right, because he is such a friendly fellow, his heavy-lidded eyes darken and deepen (with an impaling effect, to tell the uncomfortable truth) as he hopes somberly that "white people will learn to love before the Negro learns to hate."

Other new novels and essays and Texan John Howard Griffin's shocker, *Black Like Me,* about his Southern adventures in Negro disguise, confront us with unimagined depths of pain and anger among Negroes.

And yet, in the dourest and most

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Voting, Violence and Walkout in McComb

By Janet Feagans

WHEN the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee moved into deepest Mississippi on a Negro vote drive, that freedom push triggered McComb students into sit-ins, jail and high school walkouts with all the marks of a struggle to the end for equality.

Indeed, the SNCC launched its mission as a slow, educational project to help Mississippi Negroes out of their voting impotence, and the spontaneous student movement caught the Committee unprepared with bail money or legal help. But the students seem resolutely lined up for a longtime push with voter registration, and ahead of it, too.

The first foray into Mississippi voter registration commenced last May when Robert Moses, a New York SNCC member, started door-to-door canvassing in McComb of Pike County. Joined by nine other SNCC members in the next five months, the registration attempts spread from Pike to the neighboring Amite and Walthall Counties. With the help of local high school students, SNCC "citizenship classes" helped prepare the 21 successful registrants.

Amite, Pike and Walthall Counties all share discriminatory disfranchisement characteristic of Mississippi. They share other characteristics, too. The counties' non-white populations are 54, 44 and 45% respectively, close to the state figure of 44% Negro.

Amite County has 3,560 non-whites of voting age, of whom one is a registered voter, comprising .03% of the possible registrants.

Pike County Negroes fare well in comparison. Its non-white voting age population is 6,936, of whom 207, or three per cent, are registered. (This, incidentally, is half of the six per cent state average of non-white registered voters.)

Walthall County is one of the 13 counties in Mississippi with no registered Negro voters. Of 6,100 Negroes in Walthall, 2,490 are of voting age, but none is registered.

In Walthall, a SNCC member, 21-year-old John Hardy of Nashville, met physical violence. He entered the registrar's office with two local Negro applicants. They were turned down, but as they were leaving, registrar John Wood hit young Hardy on the side of his head with a pistol butt. Although Wood, who also serves as circuit clerk, admitted, "Yes, I hit him," John Hardy was charged with breach of peace. The case has been appealed, but the county achieved its end.

"We know nobody has attempted to register since," said John Doar, of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Pike County's registration of 207 Negro voters may be attributed to its "urban population" of 12,020 in McComb. Studies of southern politics

show that Negro registration increases with urbanization. "The distribution of qualified Negro electors about the state (of Mississippi) seems to be the same as the location of large cities within the state with but a few exceptions," according to an unpublished Master's thesis of James F. Barnes. V. O. Key points out in his *Southern Politics* that this is also the pattern of Negro voting in the South.

The SNCC voter registration program had its largest class in Pike County. At one time, 45 people in the Masonic Lodge studied "the duties and obligations of citizenship under a constitutional form of government"—a requirement for Mississippi registration. The average, rural Negro of this area has about sixth grade education, one SNCC worker estimated. Not only did the citizenship school have to train for the intricacies of constitutional interpretation, but the instructors were also teaching reading and writing. When time allowed, basic history became part of the course. Charles McDew of Massilon, Ohio, chairman of SNCC, in his plea for new history books, said the few available texts refer to the Civil War as "the war of Northern aggression."

Even though the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was also at work in Pike County, SNCC members found resistance building up. Earlier, Reggie Robinson of Baltimore felt that when the SNCC team arrived the people "received us in" and there was "no resistance on the part of the people themselves and no resistance from the local white power structure."

Had the high school students of Pike County not been spurred to direct action, with arrests and intimidations of their voting-age elders, the registration program might have advanced with even greater success.

This was not the case. Five local high school students, under the impression that SNCC was ready to bail them out, conducted sit-ins Aug. 29 and 30. Arrests, prayerful parades and demonstrations, the beating of six SNCC workers, school walkouts, a training school sentence for Brenda Travis and the arrest of NAACP President Curtis Bryan ensued. State Representative E. H. Hurst's "justifiable homicide" of Herbert Lee, a local Negro farmer, registered voter and friend of the students, also attended the push. Voter registration, among older Negroes, was naturally retarded by these results of sit-ins.

It took the Committee over three weeks to raise the needed $8,200 bond and most of this came from its fellow organization, Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Because two of the students who sat-in were expelled from Burgland High School over 100 students staged a protest march to city hall. This led to their arrest and subsequent threatened expulsion. These same students refused to agree to the written terms of the high school Principal, C. D. Higgins, who demanded that they refrain from protest demonstrations and further walk-outs if they wished to remain in school. By Oct. 16, students had walked out four times and on Oct. 17, the threatened mass expulsion took place. SNCC workers, Robert Moses and Dion Diamond are now conducting high school classes for the students.

There are signs that the students may awaken Negro militancy in Mississippi which will eventually lead the state out of its racist mud.

Their phenomenal protest does con-

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The Mayor's Diplomatic Blunder

(An editorial from the Norfolk Journal and Guide of October 10)

UPON HIS RETURN to Norfolk from a six-day trip to Berlin with the mayors of 22 other cities to help convince West Germans that the United States will remain firm in its commitments to preserve the freedom of that communist-encircled city, Norfolk's Mayor W. Fred Duckworth was asked by a reporter to comment on the statement of a colored civic leader in Florida to the effect that Southern mayors were out of place discussing freedom in strife-torn Berlin.

Mayor Duckworth, according to published newspaper and television report, gave this reply:

"As I said before in regard to colored people, equality should be earned, not legislated."

We've got to concede that citizen Duckworth, as an individual, has the unquestioned right, enunciated and guaranteed by the Constitutions of the United States and of Virginia, to think whatever he pleases—and to speak his mind—about the rights and yearnings and struggles for freedom and equality of three-fourths of the world's population who, incidentally, are "colored people."

But the mayor of a cosmopolitan, growing city like Norfolk has limited opportunities to speak and act altogether as a private citizen. Certainly, at the end of a trip sponsored by the United States Conference of Mayors, and paid for by the taxpayers of Norfolk, for the purpose of convincing our allies in West Germany, and especially Berlin, that the American people intend to stand behind them and even go to war to prevent Russia from taking away their freedom, he is not a private citizen but the legislative representative of all the people of Norfolk, including the twenty-five percent who are colored.

In truth, the equality colored people are struggling for requires no legislation. It is already written indelibly in the basic documents undergirding the democratic structure of our nation.

From the Declaration of Independence:

> We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

From the Constitution of the United States:

> No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States, nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

And from the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia:

> That all men are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact deprive or divest

their posterity, namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.

Indeed, equality as far as colored people, and every other kind of people, for that matter, are concerned was conceded, validated and guaranteed in the three most sacred documents of our national heritage.

The only legislation they and, happily, most other Americans are concerned about in this regard is that which has been adopted by the Southern states, including Virginia, and by most Southern cities, including Norfolk, to *deny, abridge,* or *nullify* that very equality proclaimed by the Declaration of Independence and guaranteed by federal and state constitutions.

While disagreeing with some of Mayor Duckworth's political credo and most of his social philosophy, this newspaper is nevertheless an admirer of this rugged individual who has captured the political leadership of Norfolk and, in true Horatio Alger fashion, and without benefit of the proverbial silver spoon, achieved a remarkable business success. Examples like his add meaning and substance to the image of America with its promise of opportunity and reward to all who will seek and work for them.

We wonder, though, how well our mayor would have fared if he had been obliged to attend inferior schools and been taught by teachers who had been obliged to attend inferior schools . . . if he had been denied access to recreational facilities, libraries, museums, and other cultural opportunities provided out of tax money collected from all the people . . . if he had been denied the right to vote . . . if he had been forced against his wishes to reside in a substandard neighborhood with unpaved streets, poor lighting and inadequate police protection . . . or if he had found locked against him the doors of opportunity to four-fifths of the jobs he was capable of performing.

This Berlin junket included also Mayor Haydon Burns of Jacksonville, Florida, who heads the Conference. Certainly some Germans, looking over the roster, must have remembered that the capital of Florida is Tallahassee whose police herded scores of your colored college students into jail—one of them a girl who spent 45 days behind bars—because they sought to exercise their right to eat at the lunch

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Negro Subculture, The White Man's Problem

By Avon Williams

Mr. Williams is a Nashville NAACP lawyer.

A FEW MONTHS AGO, I heard a distinguished anthropologist refer to the community life of the American Negro as a "subculture" within, but quite apart, from the main cultural life of the American people. This was quite shocking to me and, at first, evoked feelings of resentment on my part, as a Negro. However, when one surveys life in the United States, and particularly in the southern and border states one must admit the existence of this subculture, the framework of living to which most Negroes must submit.

One notices, for instance, although legal standards of marriage and family are established for the entire community, departures from these standards, such as common law sex relationships, childbirth out of wedlock, and the like, frequently find acceptance and respectability among segments of the Negro community by reason of residential, social, and even religious, ramparts which shield them from the light and censure of the community at large.

In economic development, the motive and drive for self-improvement and achievement among Negroes are largely squelched by these same racial barriers, which prevent employment of Negroes on self-respecting levels or advancement to higher positions.

In education, the segregation barrier permits application and acceptance, by the community, of false standards of accreditation to substandard Negro schools, furnishing substandard Negro education which is seldom openly and honestly recognized as substandard, until the unfortunate Negro graduate attempts to compete on an equal basis in an unsegregated educational institution; or until some local board finds it expedient to use a two-grade differential in achievement between Negro and white children as an argument for continuing segregated schools.

In recreation and culture, the Negro subculture develops most Negro children and adults in segregated churches, a few segregated playgrounds, and in loitering around segregated bars, nightclubs and street corners. The main community on the other hand develops its white children and adults in well-fitted YMCAs, YWCAs, clubs and playhouses, school scientific fairs, symphony concerts in park and school and sports competition. Mock State Governments and other such activities, sometimes attempted by Negro schools as training in citizenship, are almost completely emasculated of reality or educational value, by a segregated environment, with segregated characters, far removed from real life.

For many years the fact of this substandard subculture has been usually either ignored or rationalized along lines critical of the Negro as an ethnic

group, not only by the white population, but, indeed, by probably the greater portion of Negroes. Likewise, its consequences upon the whole life and development of the community have been largely ignored, except in accusations attempting to stereotype the Negro group on the basis of these consequences. Thus, our politicians, and others, frequently decry an alleged disproportionate amount of crime, births out of wedlock, social diseases, tuberculosis, and other symptoms of social maladjustment said to be prevalent in the Negro community. Seldom discussed, however, are the more basic problems of the extent to which racial segregation helps to create and perpetuate these conditions, and the adverse effect of such conditions, when allowed in one segment of the community, not only upon the people comprising that unfortunate segment, but also upon the community as a whole.

Aside from the general contagiousness of social disorder and maladjustments, the symptoms may have even more direct and practical effects. Breakdown of the family usually results in increased public expenditures for aid to unmarried mothers and dependent children, as well as in greater juvenile delinquency and crime. Unemployment, or low income from employment, based solely on racial discrimination, clearly adds to the social and economic burden of a community. Loss of manpower and brainpower, through restrictive and inadequate training and education of any portion of our educable population, is loss of one of our most valuable resources when the Southland is competing for industrial and cultural development in the nation, and the nation is competing for survival in the world.

The main thrust of the relatively few Negroes who have escaped to some extent the crippling effects of the Negro subculture upon their initiative and intelligence, has been mostly toward elimination, by lawful means, of the legal bases by which the segregated subculture was imposed and maintained. With the help of many enlightened, dedicated white people who recognized the dangerous impact of enforced racial segregation and its concomitant Negro subculture upon our society, these efforts of Negro leaders, largely through the courts, and more recently through the sit-in demonstrations, have met with some success in recent years.

But the experience of the last few years has demonstrated acutely that the efforts of a few leaders, Negro and white, are not enough. A man can remain in a dungeon for so long that he is reluctant, fearful, and momentarily unprepared to meet the beauty of the sunlight.

Our enlightened leaders were and are, therefore, confronted with two major problems. First, the attitudes and habits of fear, timidity, indifference, self-deprecation, deference to a mythical white superiority, a lack of civic and community responsibility, engendered among a tremendously large portion of the Negro people by their continuous subjection for decades to the Negro subculture and to the white supremacy propaganda superimposed thereon. Second, the tendency of probably the majority of the white population to view the situation as a "Negro problem," wherein the Negroes, as a sort of unwanted poor relation, are seeking to enter schools, parks, and other community facilities which really belong only to white people, seeking to acquire jobs that really belong only to white people, and seeking to live in

residential areas and in a social climate which is owned solely and exclusively by white people.

These twin attitude obstructions are illustrated, on the one hand, by Negroes who refuse to accept the advantage of sending their children to a desegregated school, and on the other hand, by decent, law abiding white people who look the other way in large numbers in implied approval, when public officials spend thousands of dollars in public tax funds, contributed by both Negro and white citizens, solely to prevent one Negro child from enjoying his legal rights.

I submit that this is a "community problem" rather than a "Negro problem." It's likewise apparent that, although Negro leaders in the time that is left from fighting in the courtrooms and at the lunch counters, can and should do much by persuading and educating the Negro people to accept the duties and responsibilities of full citizenship in a free democratic society.

Nevertheless, even with the assistance of the white people who have helped them in the past, these few Negro leaders should not be asked to solve the white man's share of the problem. When Negroes demand the right to accept the responsibilities of and participate in the life of the community, it seems a poor answer to say: "The majority of the white people of our community are prejudiced and selfish; they do not want you to enjoy citizenship on the same basis as other citizens; they do not want your dollar to be earned as easily, or to buy exactly the same merchandise or privileges. If community progress means having you participate in community life the same as they do, then they do not want community progress. It's up to *you* to convince them that they are wrong."

The time has come when responsible political, civic, business, church, and social leaders in the white community can no longer continue condoning or participating in, either expressly or by implication, such attitudes and habits, even though they themselves may be privately victims of the arbitrary racial prejudice which nurtures and sustains such group attitudes.

I sincerely believe that these many white leaders, who have for so long held back, must now come forward and take an open, affirmative stand for truth and for total community progress, whatever the personal consequence may be. They must work to change the attitudes and habits of their white brethren which are inimical to progress and the betterment of our community. They must attack with all their hearts the white man's side of the problem; in so doing, they will help immeasurably in the solution of the whole community problem.

If they miss this golden opportunity, we shall not be their judges, but history may.

The Mayor

(Continued from Page 6)

counters of stores which cultivated their patronage at all the other counters—a right, incidentally, which has now been conceded in many Southern cities.

We suppose the Germans did chuckle politely at this incongruity. But imagine the horse laugh they would have let out had the party included the mayors of Anniston, Montgomery and Birmingham, Alabama; Jackson, Mississippi; Orangeburg and Columbia, South Carolina. Obviously, the United States did not put its worst foot forward.

Strictly Subjective

(*Continued from page 2*)

persistent of the Negro writers there seems detectable a thin, strong theme of wary optimism about the South, a hope for freedom, friendship and equality unprecedented between two races living together.

This great, high hope, so cautiously suggested by Negroes, is also entertained by thoughtful white southern writers, in a frequently quite emotional assertion of the similarity and natural compatibility of Negroes and whites down here.

The late W. J. Cash, patron saint of southern white self-criticism, observed with an intensity comparable to Mr. Baldwin's that "Negro entered into white man as profoundly as white man entered into Negro—subtly influencing every gesture, every word, every emotion and idea, every attitude," and, with a biting sorrow comparable to Baldwin's acutely intelligent and humor-shot gloom, suggests a southern personality common to Negroes and whites which might, liberated from our awful shackles, make a free and affectionate society.

In the symposium, *The Southerner As American,* L. D. Reddick, a Negro scholar, points out temperamental likenesses between Dixie whites and Negroes "in speech, gait, food habits and orientation toward life." We talk and laugh the same way, make the same judgments and weep at similar sentimentalities, says Reddick, quoting Charles Black that " . . . southern whites and Negroes are bound in a special bond. In a peculiar way, they are the same kind of people . . . [even] their strife is fratricidal."

James McBride Dabbs in *The Southern Heritage* wrote; " . . . through the processes of history and the grace of God we have been made one people . . . and it is disastrous to talk and act as if we were two. If, on the contrary, we would play the game wholeheartedly together, if we would be our deepest selves, there is no telling what great age might develop in the South." Mr. Dabbs, with a white southern love and audacity exceeding any Negro literary optimism I know of, also wants Southerners to "rise to the level of loving passionately . . . [our] rich and varied configuration of people, black and white," as we love our earth and landscape, in which case we "should not only solve our greatest problem, one of two major problems of the world today, but our age would become a challenge to generations yet unborn."

Another writer, Leslie W. Dunbar in the autumn *Virginia Quarterly Review,* looks beyond the hope of Messrs. Cash, Baldwin, Lomax and Dabbs to his own southern white assertion: "I believe the South will, out of its travail and sadness and requited passion, give the world its first grand example of two races of men living together in equality and with mutual respect. The South's heroic age is with us now."

Maybe Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Lomax ought to come on back home. (I tremble to consider Mr. Baldwin's response to a suggestion that the Deep South is his home. But he has confided that his Alabama parents just barely made it to New York in time for his birth, and that traveling South was "strange, to come back to a place you've never been." Still, his Deep South origins and happen-so birth in Harlem are sufficient for any ancestor-worshiping Southerner to claim him as rightfully our own.)

Anyway, it occurs to me that the stingy, shy but very eager beginnings

of our "first grand example" to the world are preparing a place, a home, where all of us may feel like people, instead of like whites or Negroes. This is apparent in the desegregations popping out all over the South so fast you can't count them, and the community pride, relief, elaborately casual acceptance and occasional glad burst of good manners which accompany the forced change.

Maybe Mr. Baldwin, amid his own kind of folks who know so well his intelligent gloom and comic ironies, might mitigate his melancholy and enrich his wary hope. And perhaps the compatibility of white Southerners, who already love before Mr. Lomax hates, might invite and expand his natural and indigenous southern exuberance and idealism.

Maybe not next week, but it may not be long before our "rich and varied configuration of people, black and white," will meet, as these writers already have, to clean, repair, furnish and light the lamps and fires in our common home.

Voting

(*Continued from page 4*)

tradict the traditional argument of "apathy" as the reason for low Negro registration in this and other southern states. Only the naive would regard complacency as the factor causing low registration in Mississippi. Negro voting figures are available for only 69 out of 82 counties. In these same 69 counties Negroes make up 38% of the total Mississippi voting age population, but only 6% of them are registered. No Negroes are registered in 13 counties. Less than 10% of the voting age Negroes are registered in 42 counties. Between 10 and 24% of the Negro voting age population is registered in 12 counties. One other county has 25% of the Negro voting age population registered. Thus, in none of the 69 counties on which the Commission on Civil Rights has information is 50% or more of the Negro voting age population registered.

Not only population patterns (urbanization and density of Negro population) appear to explain Negro voting, or rather, non-voting. The Commission in its 1961 study of 17 "non-voting" and four "voting" counties in the Black Belt found general deprivation in education and justice; nevertheless, the four voting counties are the best of the 21.

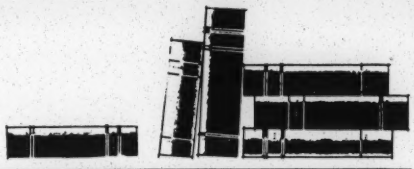
"In not one of the voting counties were there any allegations of police brutality, mob violence or illegal police practice," said the Commission.

"In other areas studied—housing, employment, public libraries, public accommodations and military establishments—deprivations were found in all 21 counties, with little difference between the 17 (non-voting and four (voting) counties."

As SNCC citizenship instructors pointed out to their Mississippi students, the power of their ballots could obtain better roads, housing, schools and libraries. (They reminded the adults that Burgland High School had only 100 books in its library.)

SNCC members work in the dark of the night, in the fear of reprisals, visiting Negro farm homes watchfully protected by shotguns. Charles McDew said of the difficulties of rural recruitment: a Mississippi country road "goes only one way." With this new militant young vitality, it may become the road to enfranchisement, political participation and equal rights.

Books



The Legacy of the Civil War
By Robert Penn Warren, 109 pp.
New York: Random House, $2.75

The only thing we learn from history, a seminal philosopher once said, is that we learn nothing from history. While this extremely pessimistic view of the human pilgrimage in the drama of the historical process is not entirely sound, it contains a painful element of truth. Man learns woefully too little from historical experiences, whether those experiences represent the depth of tragedy or the height of glory. A knowledge and sense of history should enable man to avoid the repetition of certain pathetic errors and the lethal intoxication of certain comfortable illusions.

The Civil War should be a perennial source of instruction and meaning for America, probed deeply and mercilessly in search of meanings and lessons. Civil War centennial observances ought to illumine the past and present. They will be justified only as they make relevant to contemporary and future existence the tragic lessons of the national nightmare, catastrophe, and pit of terror, fanaticism, and irrationalism of the Civil War. The War was the American soul and spirit on Calvary.

In *The Legacy of the Civil War,* the Kentucky-born poet and novelist, Robert Penn Warren, wrestles heroically and sustainedly with the problem of the ultimate meaning and consequence of the war. With the skill of a surgeon and the free imagination of a poet, Warren makes a genuine contribution to the understanding of the inner meaning and heritage of the war. True, one might wish that he would have been more systematic, comprehensive, and rigorous. But this beautifully written little book is fraught with keen observations, fresh insights, and rich perceptions. Its chief virtue is its stress on the crowning value of humility. According to Warren, the war

> gave the South the Great Alibi and gave the North the Treasury of Virtue. By the Great Alibi the South explains, condones, and transmutes everything .... By the Great Alibi the Southerner makes his Big Medicine. He turns defeat into victory, defects into vices. Even more pathetically, he turns his great virtues into absurdities—sometimes vicious absurdities .... And the most painful and costly consequences of the Great Alibi are found, of course, in connection with race. The race problem, according to the Great Alibi, is the doom defined by history—by New England slaves, New England and Middlewestern Abolitionists, cotton, climate, the Civil War, Reconstruction, Wall Street, the Jews. Everything flows into the picture (pp. 54-5).

The Great Alibi is, therefore, a rationalization for failure and wrongs.

The North, on the other hand, Warren holds, is the victim of self-righteousness, hypocrisy, and moral pretensions. It claims to have a monopoly on virtue.

> The Treasury of Virtue, which is the psychological heritage left to the North by the Civil War, may not be as comic or vicious as the Great Alibi, but it is equally unlovely. It may even be, in the end, equally corrosive of national, and personal integrity. If the Southerner, with his Great Alibi, feels trapped by history, the Northerner, with his Treasury of Virtue, feels redeemed by history, automatically redeemed. He has in his pocket, not a Papal indulgence peddled by some wandering par-

doner of the Middle Ages, but an indulgence for all sins past, present, and future, freely given by the hand of history (p. 59).

Warren has learned well the great historical lessons of humility, tolerance, and repentance, with their liberating and transforming powers. They heal some of the ghastly wounds and broken meanings of experience, individual and collective. They repair torn social tissues.

> The Great Alibi and the Treasury of Virtue—they are the maiming liabilities we inherit from the Civil War. But at the same time they may contribute—how unworthily—to the attraction the War holds for us. The Great Alibi and the Treasury of Virtue both serve deep needs of poor human nature; and if, without historical realism and self-criticism, we look back on the War, we are merely compounding the old inherited delusions which our weakness craves (pp. 75-6).

So true! These words are prophetic.

Samuel DuBois Cook
Atlanta University

Black Like Me.
By John Howard Griffin, 176 pp.
Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., $3.50

Black Like Me is the report of seven weeks that John Howard Griffin, white Texas writer, father of three children, spent as a poor and aging Negro in the Deep South in the fall of 1959.

Absorbing drugs and sunlamp rays and applying dye, Griffin became "Negro," unquestionably accepted as such by both races, and spent the seven weeks traveling in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia.

The Negro Griffin not only found it difficult to obtain the simplest of necessities—a drink of water, a rest room, a bite to eat—but he learned to feel despised and unwanted. In New Orleans he was the hunted prey of a white boy who wanted some "fun." He met the "hate stare" from whites, or they looked through him as if he were invisible, not a human being of flesh and spirit. On a bus ride from New Orleans to Hattiesburg, Miss., he was among the Negroes prevented from going to a rest room—after the whites had left the bus—on the whim of the driver. He spent one night hitchhiking from Biloxi to Mobile, subjected to gruelling examination from every driver, with no question too personal or too debasing.

One assured him on that long and terrifying ride to Mobile that, "I'll tell you how it is here. We'll do business with you people. . . . Other than that, you're just *completely off the record as far as we're concerned.* And the quicker you people get that through your heads, the better off you'll be."

And the Negroes? The black Griffin found in them a community of sympathy born of long years as the oppressed. Just the fact of Griffin's blackness made him a part of suffering and indignity, and insured kindness and help in each Negro community. Only in Atlanta, among the places visited by Griffin, did he find a Negro community that had achieved some success and power, and in Montgomery he found resistance instead of dull hopelessness. (This was several months before the advent of the sit-in movement.)

This is a harsh little book. It is a journalistic report of indecency and inhumanity sure to shock some white Americans who have never put themselves in the place of a Negro in the South. (And this is not the South, by the way, of brave struggle and progress; it is that other South of terror and dark fear.)

Griffin writes in his preface, "This may not be all of it. It may not cover

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Oklahoma Racial Amity, A Tennessee Yankee,

The heady wine of revolution fortified Mccomb, Miss., students to move beyond the usual sit-in targets of lunch counters, jails and non-violent endurance of violence in their quest for equality. In the course of five walkouts over the expulsion of Brenda Travis, 16-year-old sit-in star, over 100 students also demanded equality with their principal and superintendent of schools. Mr. Higgins gave the 100 odd an agreement to sign asking for re-admission to school on probation and under pain of expulsion if they walked out again. The students declined to sign and presented the surely astonished Mr. Higgins with this statement for *him* to sign:

"I, as principal of Burgland High School with the consent of the Superintendent will agree to let Brenda Travis re-enter school. Brenda will register for the second semester without any preliminaries."

Up to press time, nobody had signed anybody's peremptory demands in the matter of Miss Travis and student sit-ins.

Police Chief Herbert Jenkins of Atlanta, who often disarms foreign visitors with his American candor about race trouble and Deep South foibles, has laughed with Indians, Africans, Japanese, and many-hued tourists over his friend with a downtown hamburger stand who decided to serve a couple of native Negroes.

When Chief Jenkins' short order friend served the two at a side booth, a vigilante of the Ku Klux Klan entered and demanded to know "what them niggers is doing eating in here?"

The hamburger dispenser arched his brows, cast his eyes toward the suspect booth and said, "You mean those Indians?"

"Oh," subsided the protector of whites against homegrown color. "Oh. Okay."

A young lady crusader for lunch counter freedom in a Deep South city repeatedly plagued police with her participation in sit-ins. After his first shock at the spectacle of an undoubtedly Southern white female student persisting in Negro demonstration, a police captain relaxed into the easy tolerance and companionable humor with which the best of cops endure drunks, hustlers, forgers, wife-beaters and, nowadays, students.

On the third call to arrest his trouble maker, the officer regarded her dogged and nervous attack on a piece of pie and a cup of coffee in a Woolworth's sit-in.

"Go on and finish your pie," he offered with weary patience. And, on the way out of a storeful of staring customers to the paddy wagon, he warned. "If you don't cut this out, they're gonna say you and I are keeping company."

A native Tennesseean at 39 is the second youngest Michigan Supreme Court justice. He is Otis M. Smith, appointed from his post as state auditor general by Governor Swainson.

Judge Smith was born in Memphis and moved to Nashville, where he early distinguished himself in such career opportunities as his state capitol afforded a Negro native son, working as messenger and porter. Meantime, Mr. Smith studied at Fisk University in Nashville and Catholic University in Washngton, got a law degree and gave up running and fetching work for law practice in Flint, Mich. He started in state office as public service commissioner and was made auditor general by Gov. G. Mennen Williams.

Judge Smith is the first Negro to sit on the Michigan Supreme Court.

Books

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all the questions, but it is what it is like to be a Negro in a land where we keep the Negro down. Some whites will say this is not really it. They will say this is a white man's experience as a Negro in the South, not the Negro's." However, I find it difficult to dismiss this objection as easily as Griffin does.

No white person can know what it is really like, day in and day out, childhood on up, to be a Negro, just from taking one short journey. More than that, Griffin can escape, and does, as in the latter parts of his journey when he changes from Negro to white from day to day. Can the real Negro escape?

This book *is* the story of a "white man's experience as a Negro in the South" because Griffin, no matter what his color is outside, is a white man inside, with all the white man's conditioning and experience. Seven weeks as a Negro, with no home, no family, no pleasures, no experience of growing up as a Negro and telling children that they, too, are Negroes, is not exactly what it's like to be Negro. Griffin's shock of being treated as a second-class citizen is genuine, but somehow his method of assuming the Negro's life smacks faintly of the gimmick and the sensational.

This is not to take away from the main point of the book, however, which is that the mere fact of a man's color restricts him from the rights and privileges which others in this society enjoy. *Black Like Me* tells as does the old song,

" . . . if you're black, oh brother
Get back, get back, get back."

Dorothy Miller

High Fashion Police

"It does seem noteworthy," writes Sigma Chi Allen Early, Jr., of Amarillo, Texas, that the Grand Chapter of Sigma Chi has "voted to remove the word 'white' from the constitutional provisions for membership."

It does seem noteworthy that Sigma Chi, an exclusive college social fraternity in the United States and Canada, seems to clear the way for a social brotherhood restricted only by social choice.

"We do not have colored people in Durant and have not had for over 40 years, so there's no segration (sic) trouble here," replied the city clerk's office of Durant, Okla., to an SRC postcard survey on lunch counter desegregation. An SRC researcher in a phone call to Durant talked to a city hall secretary who further explained racial amity in Durant: "No, I don't think anything is desegregated, and anyway, colored people have to be outside the city limits before sundown."

A Southern Mississippi rector of several small-town churches hastened last month to Jackson to greet 15 clergymen of the Prayer Pilgrimage to the 60th General Convention of the Episcopal Church, stopping en route for a bit of witness for racial brotherhood. Imprisoned in Jackson for "breach of the peace" in prayerfully attempting to integrate the bus station, the visiting clerics hailed their Mississippi brother with love and gratitude. But in jail they protested that he should brave his job, and perhaps life and limb, in support of their witness for brotherhood in the name of Christ and church.

"Give us your blessing, brother," urged the Rev. James Jones of Chicago, in a burst of anxiety, "and get out of here!"

Their brother, however, accompanied the party into the courtroom and sat with them through their trial in view of all Mississippi.

New South

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